



Town of Discovery Bay
A California Community Services District
"Friday Letter"
To the Board of Directors
September 18, 2015

From: Rick Howard, General Manager

General Manager/Administration:

- ✓ The Secondary Project which includes the Oxidation Ditch and Clarifier were put into service this week. This project wraps up the initial \$14.1M list of projects financed by the bond. The start-up process went as planned. The next step will be to drain Oxidation Ditch 2, clean it, and make sure there is no significant maintenance issues that need to take place and it will then be put back into service. Once that occurs, Oxidation Ditch 1 and Clarifiers 1 and 2 (at Plant 1) will be shut down and all flow will be directed to Plant 2. (see pictures below of the new Oxidation Ditch going up and Clarifier starting to fill)



- ✓ The Roberta Fuss Tot Lot on Clipper has been visited by smokers and drinkers that have left debris behind. The Landscape team cleaned out the area completely and put down new bark. (see pictures below of the revamped area)



- ✓ The Town subscribes to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through our insurance carrier SDRMA. As a result of the tragic passing of Sharon Butler, through our EAP program, a grief counselor was brought in and met with a small group of employees. The feed-back that I received was that the counselor provided exceptional support to those that needed it. In situations like this, while fortunately rare, it was nice to know that the program was available to the staff.
- ✓ The bid opening for the Plant 2 Equipment Cover took place this past Wednesday. We're currently evaluating the bids and will bring forward recommendations to you at your next meeting.
- ✓ Please see the attached article from today's DB Press regarding the predicted El Niño impact.
- ✓ I will be attending the CSDA conference next week in Monterey.

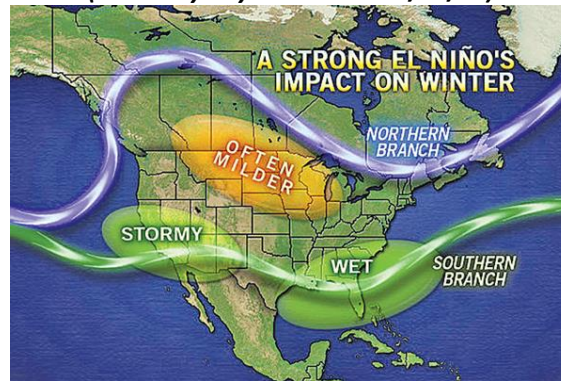
Important Dates:

Upcoming important dates are as follows:

- Community Foundation Rockin' the Bay Concert at the Yacht Harbor lawn – Saturday, September 19 – 4-7 p.m.
- CSD Regular Board Meeting – Wednesday, October 7 at 7:00 p.m.
- 2015 Rocktoberfest at the Community Center – Saturday, October 10

El Niño stirs as drought still causes trouble

(Discovery Bay Press article 9/18/15)



The forecasts are in and it's looking increasingly likely that California could be going from one extreme to another in terms of chaotic weather.

As homeowners struggle to conserve water and city officials deal with the effects of the drought on day-to-day operations, an El Niño is brewing out at sea. The event could cause an atmospheric shift researchers say might bring rainfall California has not seen since the late 1990s. After a long and painful dry spell, many will welcome the change – but a soaking of this magnitude could usher in a whole new set of problems.

“All models surveyed predict El Niño to continue into the Northern Hemisphere (during) spring 2016 and all multi-model averages predict a peak in late fall (or) early winter,” said representatives of the National Weather Service in an advisory last week, further stating that there is a 95 percent chance of this prediction holding.

Characterized as a warming of the sea surface temperatures in the eastern region of the tropical Pacific Ocean due to a natural change in air circulation, an El Niño event occurs every few years and unleashes a disruption of weather patterns that can effect almost every corner of the globe. It is known to cause severe droughts in Southeast Asia and Australia, mild winters in the central U.S. and devastation to the fishing industry off the western coast of South America. California tends to see dramatically increased rainfall.

Residents familiar with the last major event, which spanned from 1997 to 1998, might recall flooding and landslides that left more than a dozen people dead across the state. Officials say they are preparing for these disasters this time around, even in the midst of a hot, drought-stricken summer.

“When communities are fortunate enough to have this type of advanced warning ... that something might be coming their way, I think most of them are going to plan appropriately for any circumstance that might present itself - what we are seeing now with this El Niño event is no exception,” said Discovery Bay General Manager Rick Howard, who recently conducted a training workshop with his staff and a consultant that specifically addressed how to respond to an El Niño-linked crisis.

With portions of Discovery Bay lying below sea level, flooding and fears of a levy breach on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta are seen as a major threat for the small, unincorporated community, which relies on Contra Costa County authorities for much of its emergency response.

Discovery Bay's neighbors – Brentwood, Oakley, and Antioch – have started planning and preparing early too, hoping to take preventative measures and thwart flooding before it begins. As independent cities, they are more apt to handle their own emergencies, though the county still provides services such as creek maintenance and could step in to help during a major catastrophe.

"We have been preparing for the projected El Niño year and I believe we will be ready when it hits," said Antioch City Manager Steven Duran. "An emphasis has been placed on cleaning storm channels ... our collections systems supervisor is spending considerably more of his time this year evaluating our storm infrastructure to ensure that we are as ready as possible."

In Oakley, officials say that several new drainage projects have been installed in recent years and that existing infrastructure is in the process of being cleared, with one more new project set to be awarded at a city council meeting in October.

Chris Ehlers, assistant director of public works in Brentwood, said that preparations are also underway in his city, but he took the time to highlight the importance of a citizen's role in battening down the hatches. He explained that even though many people are tired of keeping water usage low and avoiding fines due to the drought, a correct course of action by individuals is essential to keeping the community safe when the weather patterns shift.

"One of the big things our residents should pay attention to is that now is the time to do your part at home ... pruning your trees, cleaning your gutters, keeping up with the leaves as they fall," he said. "If you know you live in an area that has had water problems in the past, it's a good idea to be prepared with sandbags and pumps before the rain comes."

If any potential incident should get out of control when storms arrive, communities will be able to address it together through California's Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). The interagency exchange was made effective in 1993, after a devastating firestorm in Oakland mandated change.

SEMS allows for increased coordination, designates command and control and fosters mutual-aid transfers among local, county and state responders. It also implements triage in worst-case scenario situations.

For example, if there were an earthquake along the Hayward Fault Zone, which touches western Contra Costa County, resources would most likely go to that region, as eastern areas might experience little damage – whereas if El Niño causes serious flooding, resources could end up east in Discovery Bay, Oakley or nearby communities susceptible to flooding.

In the event something goes wrong and overwhelms responders at any level, with or without SEMS, tough decisions will have to be made in a brief period of time – and that's what local officials will continue planning for while conditions are still dry.

"Imagine that a generator goes down during flooding and we end up with 10 incidents associated with this one issue, but there are only enough resources to handle five of them; which ones do we let go?" asked Howard, explaining that this was one of the questions asked and deliberated on during his workshop. "That's the triage that needs to happen in a situation like this. If you've got major flooding somewhere, you've got to make sure resources go to the ones that need it the most."